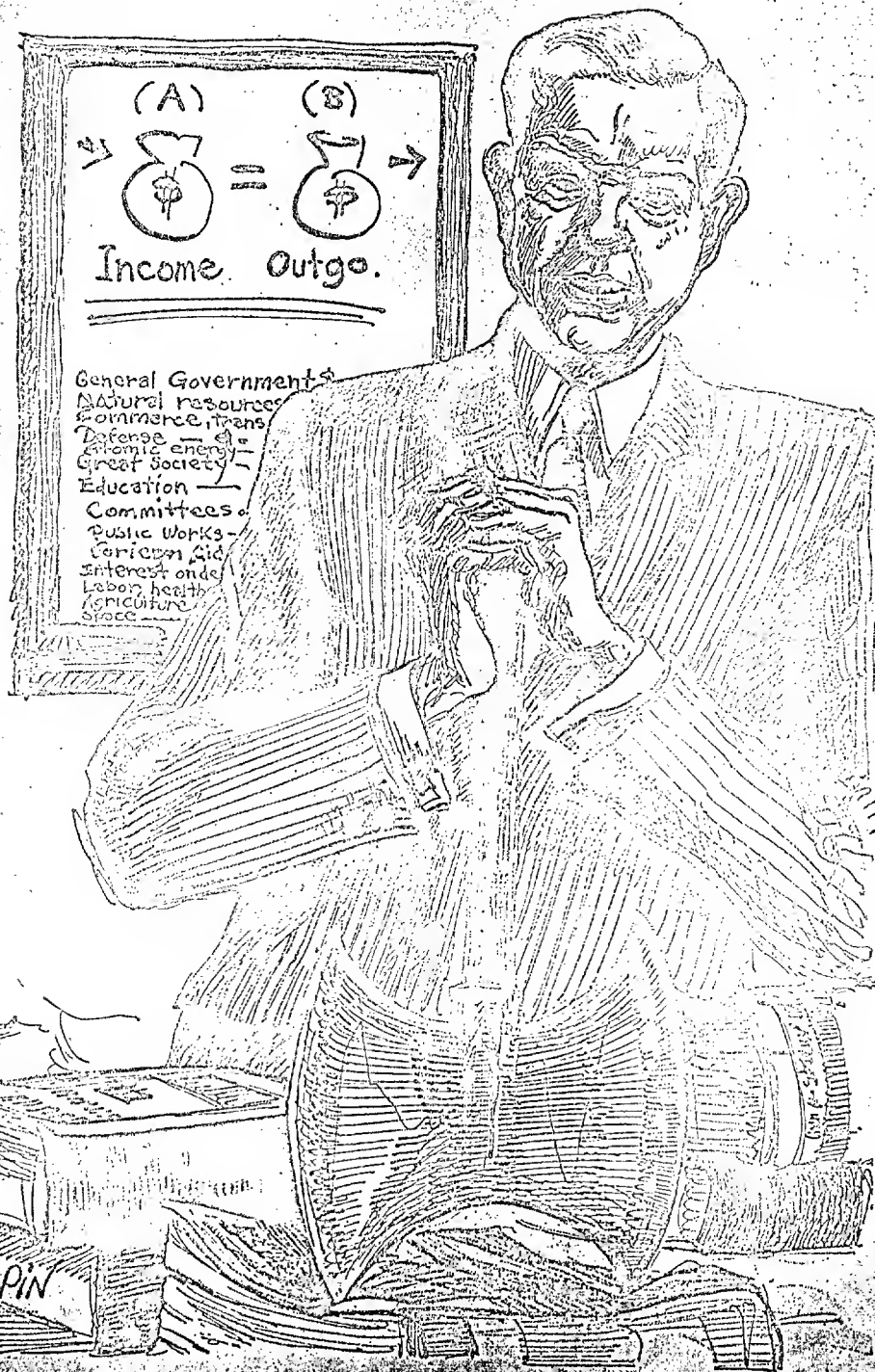


George Mahon wields a powerful ax

His House Appropriations Committee's budget cutting does not greatly affect the total level of federal spending. But it can vastly influence the way congressmen vote



John Maynard Keynes may have influenced President Lyndon Baine Johnson's economic policymakers. But he hasn't swayed George Her man Mahon.

This is significant because Mahon is a tall, lanky one-time Texas farm boy who, in 34 years as a congress man, has risen to head the larges and possibly most powerful com mittee in Congress—the Hous Committee on Appropriations.

Mahon (pronounced Mayhahr symbolizes Congress' power ove the purse. His committee weigh and passes upon the President' every budget request, whether it i for the war in Vietnam or a bo weevil laboratory in Tallulah, La. Spending requests now total 20% of the nation's income, exceed th sales of the top 40 industrial com panies, and have momentous impac on the economy.

Two plus two. Mahon wants n part of Lord Keynes' new econom ics. His economic philosophy i clear and simple: Balance the bud get. "I take the fifth-grade arithme tic approach," he says. "I try to d all I can to see that we pay ou own way . . . that income equal outgo."

He sees federal spending as means of running the government not a method of stimulating th economy. If Congress doesn't ti spending to income, he warns, i will "lose all sense of orientation."

A majority of the 51-membe Appropriations Committee concurs. In fact, there are few in Congres who view spending as a fiscal tool. One of them, Representative Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis.), a member of th Joint Economic Committee, com plains that Congress can't ac rationally on the spending leve without considering its "macroeco nomic consequences." But in Cong res, he concedes, "This is an ide whose time has not yet come. Quips another: "Walter Heller is i another world."

Think thrifty. In accordance with